

In flight it gave a call bearing resemblance to that of the Banded Plover. It settled in wet pasture and commenced feeding.

The bird remained about a week and then left the farm. It was reported at a nearby lake, where it stayed a short time, then disappeared.

The Spur-winged Plovers reported by Serventy and Butler were also seen at Lake Muir on January 1, 1957, by my wife and myself. The birds were in the paddocks behind the farmhouse, not by the lake as when seen previously. The length of time between this and the previous record indicates that the birds are probably resident in the area.

— ERIC LINDGREN, Mt. Barker.

Black Duck Diving.—While in New Zealand in 1954 I was surprised to observe both Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) and ducks, evidently adult Black Duck (*Anas superciliosa*) diving systematically. The position was obscured to some extent by the possibility of the "Black Duck" being Mallard hybrids. However, birds with a prominent supercilial stripe, and to all appearances Black Duck, were observed diving in the same way as Mallard.

The mode of diving is a "duck dive," head first, to the bottom. The ascent is made in the normal swimming position.

Black Duck were observed diving in Pukekura Park, New Plymouth, on April 5. Dives were approximately three seconds' duration in a depth of about two feet of water. Mallard in the Park were observed diving on other occasions. At Lake Mangamahoe, near New Plymouth, several ducks were observed diving, apparently for food, on March 2. In all 50 to 60 ducks were present and these all appeared to be Black Duck.

I could not recall ever having seen Black Duck dive in Australia and several Australian bird-watchers, whom I consulted, agreed that they had not seen this species dive.

However, while at the 1957 Gould League Camp, I watched, on October 15, four young Black Duck diving, apparently for food. These were on the outer margin of the waterside vegetation on the north shore, i.e., in relatively shallow water.

More recently—February, 1958—while taking a rowing boat up a narrow reed-lined channel at Lake Yanchep, my daughter was surprised to see what appeared to be a Black Duck swimming vigorously under water, the wings being used for propulsion. A Black Duck had been preceding the boat up the channel and the bird seen resembled a Black Duck in all particulars. However, the submersion of the bird was not observed, and it did not surface within sight, i.e., it negotiated at least one bend of the channel before surfacing, so that a slight doubt must attach itself to this observation.

Diving in the Mallard appears to be unusual, and the position is summed up in an extract from *The Handbook of British Birds*—Witherby, Jourdain, Ticehurst and Tucker, 1944, vol. 3, p. 232: "Young birds dive for food fairly freely and adults will do so at times; G. C. S. Ingram and H. H. Salmon have observed on a

number of occasions systematic diving after fallen acorns in 2-3 feet of water. Brief splashing plunges under water may be observed in the case of parties playing and chasing one another and wounded or moulting birds or ducks molested by drakes will also seek to escape by diving. C. W. Townsend and Phillips consider that wings are used to some extent under water and the latter author is 'sure that very young birds spread the wing rudiments while diving.'—B.W.T."

The evidence is limited, but it appears possible that the Black Duck will prove to closely resemble the Mallard in its diving habits and that there may be a regional difference in behaviour between the Black Duck in Australia and the same species in New Zealand.

—ERIC H. SEDGWICK, Collie.

Myobatrachus gouldii in the Coastal Hills near City Beach.— On August 4, 1957, I was searching for termites for feeding lizards in my terrarium at City Beach. In the course of this work I turned over a big old *Banksia* log lying in rather dense scrub in the sandhills about 300 yards to the north-east of the City Beach School. The bark came off very easily and as expected hundreds of termites were given the alarm. My attention was immediately drawn to a little frog which had fallen on its back by the disturbance and which was showing its light-coloured and spotted belly. At first sight it rather reminded me of *Pseudophryne guentheri* but closer checking indicated that it was *Myobatrachus gouldii*—a very small specimen only 15 mm. in total length. Dr. A. R. Main, who saw the frog later in the day, stated it was the smallest of the species he had ever seen, and believed it to be about three months old.



The frog, *Myobatrachus gouldii*, in the hand.

Photo, G. A. Philipp.